

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Access

100 Swanlund Administration Building  
601 East John Street  
Champaign, IL 61820



February 5, 2015

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**INTRODUCTION**

On December 3, 2014, [REDACTED] (Complainant), a student in the College of Veterinary Medicine (Vet Med), filed a complaint with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Access (ODEA). On December 10, 2014, [REDACTED] a [REDACTED] filed a complaint with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Access. Pursuant to the *Polices and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination and Harassment*, both Complainants alleged sexual harassment. The Complainants named Dr. Valarmathi Thiruvanamalai, Assistant Professor in Vet Med, as the Respondent.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Dr. Valarmathi Thiruvanamalai, M.D., Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the College of Vet Med, Department of Comparative Biosciences. His curriculum vitae indicates that he teaches stem cell courses and trainings, professional affiliations and medical memberships, along with a host of peer reviewed publications. His base salary line is jointly supported by the College of Vet Med and the College of Medicine; however, his departmental home is the Department of Comparative Biosciences in the College of Vet Med. He began with the department on January 16, 2013. His first seven months were spent observing and building his laboratory in stem cell research.

Respondent recruited two graduate students to conduct research in his lab. [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] who is a native of [REDACTED]. Both of their appointments in Respondent's lab began on August 16, 2013. Respondent also recruited [REDACTED] to work in his lab as a [REDACTED]. She, too, is a native [REDACTED]. She began working in the Respondent's lab on September 12, 2014.

As a graduate student in Respondent's lab, [REDACTED] has done significant work and presented on the influence of embryonic cardiac myocytes on the cardiac potential of marrow stromal cells in a three-dimensional collagen cell carrier. A review of [REDACTED] transcript presents her an exemplary student. At her request, she was removed from the Respondent's lab on December 8, 2014. She currently has block grant support with a full tuition waiver which is effective through August 15, 2015.

[REDACTED] At her request she was removed from the Respondent's lab on December 8, 2014, and the College has secured other employment opportunities for her.

[REDACTED] At her request, she was removed from the Respondent's lab in June 2014 [REDACTED] was assigned to a new lab in the summer of 2014, and she is now in the MS program. [REDACTED]

## SUMMARY OF PROCESS

Department Head of Comparative Biosciences, Duncan Ferguson, contacted ODEA on November 19, 2014 stating that he wanted to discuss another development with the Respondent.<sup>2</sup> ODEA met with Dr. Ferguson, and then met with [REDACTED] on December 3, 2014. Complainant [REDACTED] alleged inappropriate and concerning conduct by Respondent. Complainant sought to be removed from Respondent's lab and assigned to another lab. She also provided ODEA with a 17 page letter detailing the incidents she had discussed in the meeting. ODEA met with [REDACTED] on December 10, 2014. She alleged similar conduct by Respondent and provided ODEA with a 12 page document detailing incidents she had discussed. ODEA met with the named Respondent who denied most of the allegations outlined by the Complainants. Due to the nature of the allegations, and pursuant to provisions in the campus *Policies and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination and Harassment*, ODEA elevated this matter to a formal investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that there are two complainants in this matter. However, this report includes brief profiles on three individuals (not including the Respondent), as ODEA has received similar complaints from all three which have led to this investigation and report.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ferguson was previously involved in facilitating [REDACTED] removal from Respondent's lab following her June 2014 complaint with ODEA.

The investigation included a review of the Informal Resolution investigation and report filed by [REDACTED] with ODEA on or around June 4, 2014. This investigation also included meetings and interviews with Dr. Ferguson, the two Complainants, and three departmental faculty members, as well as a review of information provided by the department, the Complainants, and another graduate student. All but one of the interviews were conducted separately. For the sake of anonymity, the names of the witnesses will not be included in this report or discussed with Dr. Thiruvanamalai, the Complainants, or any other parties, except as required by law.

#### **COMPLAINANTS' ALLEGATIONS:**

Complainant [REDACTED] stated that from the time she began in Respondent's lab she has been on the receiving end of his sexually harassing behavior. Following is a non-exhaustive list of the comments and behaviors that Complainant [REDACTED] alleges that Respondent has imparted to her: Respondent called her at home; Respondent told her he loves her; Respondent called her "sweetie" and "sweetheart"; Respondent sent her inappropriate e-mails and text messages; Respondent put his hand on her shoulder and leg; Respondent came to her apartment unannounced and without invitation, asked the apartment management for Complainant's boyfriend's number, and called him to inquire about her whereabouts; Respondent told [REDACTED] that she is going to have [REDACTED] children (Complainant [REDACTED] and Respondent is Indian); Respondent informed Complainant [REDACTED] that he knows when she is having her monthly menstrual cycle; Respondent invited Complainant [REDACTED] to share a hotel room when they attended an international stem cell conference in Canada; Respondent stated that he is not happy about the time she spends with her boyfriend and asked her if she is going to marry her boyfriend.

Additionally, Complainant alleged that Respondent yelled at her and threatened not to give her guidance on her research when she tried to conduct experiments without his permission or approval. Complainant [REDACTED] further stated that: Respondent tried to isolate her by telling her to eat her lunch in his office; Respondent complained to her about other faculty and staff in the department; Respondent exhibited temper control problems; Respondent stated that everyone was out to destroy his lab; and Respondent discouraged her from talking to others in the department demanding that any e-mail from anyone in the department be shared with him so that he could discern any effort to sabotage his lab.

Complainant [REDACTED] also alleged that she felt Respondent invaded her privacy as he would text her if he believed her restroom break was too long. Moreover, she stated that on numerous occasions he sent text messages and e-mails that she found to be inappropriate, confusing, and scary. She also stated that he regularly asked her how she spent her weekends. Moreover, Complainant [REDACTED] stated that Respondent told her he hired a married woman (referring to [REDACTED] so that they couldn't accuse him of sexual harassment. Complainant [REDACTED] alleged that she has asked Respondent to discontinue the questions, the inappropriate comments, the touching, and the yelling, but Respondent continued. Complainant [REDACTED] sought to move to another lab.

Complainant [REDACTED] alleged that during her interview for the position of [REDACTED] Respondent described the work atmosphere as being relaxed and safe, and told her that she would be appreciated. Complainant [REDACTED] further alleged, however, that on the second day of work it became clear that Respondent would not live up to his promise. Complainant [REDACTED] stated that Respondent made harassing, filthy, and sexual comments about what she does on the weekends, and whether or not she was having orgies or knitting. Following is a non-exhaustive list of the comments and behaviors that Complainant [REDACTED] alleged that Respondent imparted to her: Respondent told Complainant [REDACTED] not to trust a particular faculty member. He specifically asked if they were related and demanded that Complainant [REDACTED] get a DNA test to prove that they were not related, which she refused; Respondent talked openly about Respondent [REDACTED] monthly cycle and asked her if she was pregnant; Respondent once made a comment about not feeling cold because he was with "hot beauties" who could warm him up; Respondent came to her home unannounced and without invitation; Respondent tried to force her to drink alcohol; Respondent called and texted both complainants to inquire about the other; Respondent made very offensive, gender specific, remarks about previous graduate assistant, [REDACTED] to Complainants; Respondent blamed Complainant [REDACTED] and Complainant [REDACTED] when lab outcomes were not favorable and yelled at both complainants; and Respondent threatened to throw items at Complainant [REDACTED] in Complainant [REDACTED] presence. Complainant [REDACTED] summarized her concerns and stated that as a result of sheer paranoia, Respondent has made their lives hell. Complainant [REDACTED] stated that she asked that the comments and behavior stop, but they continued. She, too, sought to work in another lab.

#### RESPONDENT'S RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS:

On December 18, 2014, ODEA met with Respondent to discuss the complaints brought to our office and to provide an opportunity for him to respond. In response to the complaint that he made sexually inappropriate comments to and toward Complainant [REDACTED] and Complainant [REDACTED] Respondent denied the allegations. Respondent asserted that the term "sweetie" or "sweetheart" is a term that he uses often as a term of endearment. He states that he treated both complainants as if they were his daughters. In response to the allegation that he went to Complainant [REDACTED] apartment and asked for her boyfriend's number, Respondent asserted that he was worried when she did not show up to the lab, and that the apartment manager offered her boyfriend's number. Respondent further asserted that he called the boyfriend's number only to make sure that Complainant [REDACTED] was safe. In response to the allegation that he told Complainant [REDACTED] that she was going to have [REDACTED] children, Respondent stated that it was a joke.

In response to the allegation that he tried to keep the Complainants isolated from faculty, staff, and others in the department, Respondent stated that such was not the case as he asserted that he encouraged Complainant [REDACTED] to participate in the monthly Research Trainee Group (RTG) meetings.<sup>3</sup> In response to the allegation that Respondent demanded that Complainants eat in the lab, Respondent asserted that the lab has a biosafety level 2 criteria because of the work performed. Special practices and protocol dictate that worker safety and environmental

<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the RTG meetings is to form and maintain a link between graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and the faculty members within the College of Veterinary Medicine.

protection standards address and minimize the risks associated with handling agents requiring increased levels of containment. Therefore, and given the potential for lentivirus contamination, Respondent stated that food is not allowed in the lab.

In response to the allegation that he demanded Complainant [REDACTED] take a DNA test, Respondent stated that was not true, but that the faculty member did make a complaint about Complainant singing loud in the lab. Respondent asserted that he told Complainant [REDACTED] to use earplugs and to be respectful of faculty and staff who might be engaged in grant writing. Respondent also reported that Complainant [REDACTED] had no respect for the lab. He cited that her disposal techniques for cell cultures and bio-hazard waste materials were inadequate. He further noted her disrespect for the lab as he stated that she, just like [REDACTED] would put her feet up near stem cell tissue cultures in the sterile environment of the lab. As for the lab outcomes, Respondent stated that he would become stressed if lab outcomes were not favorable because of the thousands of research dollars that could/would be jeopardized.

In response to the allegations that he made comments about knowing when complainants were on their monthly cycle, and that he asked Complainant [REDACTED] if she was pregnant, Respondent stated that he is a physician and accordingly he is aware of these things. Further, Respondent stated that after Complainant [REDACTED] reported that she could not lift more than ten pounds of liquid nitrogen needed to further a lab protocol due to the freezer being unplugged, Respondent asked Complainant [REDACTED] if she was pregnant as he thought that might be the reason for her lifting limitations.

Respondent denied yelling as well as every other complaint leveled against him by the Complainants. ODEA reminded Respondent that complaints, previously brought by [REDACTED] mirrored the current complaints. He again denied all of the remaining allegations.

#### **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:**

In addition to meeting with Complainants [REDACTED] ODEA also referenced the Informal Resolution disposition report completed pursuant to [REDACTED] complaint filed with this office in June 2014. ODEA also met with Duncan Ferguson, Department Head of Comparative Biosciences, and interviewed three faculty members in the Department of Comparative Biosciences.

In accordance with the campus *Policies and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination and Harassment at the University of Illinois of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, ODEA used the preponderance of the evidence standard in arriving at the conclusions below. A preponderance of the evidence requires that the evidence supporting the findings is more convincing than the evidence to the contrary.

University policy classifies sexual harassment as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education status in an academic course or program, or participation

in an activity; or (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions or a decision affecting an individual's education status in an academic course or program, or participation in an activity; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or educational environment.

In order to establish a violation of this policy, the evidence would need to demonstrate that Respondent engaged in unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature and that the complainants' submission or opposition to the conduct explicitly or implicitly affected Respondents' academic and/or employment opportunities (also known as quid pro quo); or that Respondent's behavior was sufficiently severe or pervasive as to create what a reasonable person would deem as a hostile, intimidating, or repugnant environment (also known as hostile environment).

#### Quid Pro Quo

Quid pro quo harassment occurs when submission to or rejection of unwelcome sexual conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the complaining party(ies). Both complainants allege that Respondent engaged them in conversations about their romantic relationships, made comments about their menstrual cycle, inquired about their sexual activities, invaded their personal space with unsolicited visits to their homes, routinely referred to them as "sweetie" and "sweetheart", and made comments and inquires that they generally found to be intrusive and discomforting. Further, the complainants alleged that Respondent occasionally had difficulty controlling his anger and yelled at them when lab experiments did not yield expected results. Complainant [REDACTED] also alleged that Respondent threatened not to give guidance when she attempted to conduct experiments without Respondent's oversight. Both complainants reported that they asked Respondent to stop engaging in the conduct that led to this complaint being filed. However, at no time did either complainant express that refusing to engage Respondent jeopardized or threatened their academic or employment status. Complainant [REDACTED] mentioned that Respondent threatened to stop providing her research guidance. However, this threat was not in connection with the conduct that led to this complaint, nor was it made after Complainant [REDACTED] responded negatively to Respondent's comments, gestures, or inquires. As such, the evidence does not support a finding of quid pro quo sexual harassment.

#### Hostile Environment

In determining whether unwelcome sexual conduct rises to the level of a "hostile environment" in violation of University policy, the central inquiry is whether the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to unreasonably interfere with complainants' work and/or academic performance, or to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. A "reasonable person" standard is used in assessing whether the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive.

Complainant [REDACTED] and prior Complainant [REDACTED] began working in Respondent's lab in August 2013. Both [REDACTED] reported that during their first semester in the lab, Respondent touched them in ways that made them uncomfortable, including rubbing their backs and shoulders. Complainant [REDACTED] also alleged that Respondent has slid his hands from her.

shoulders down her arms and back to her upper thighs. Respondent allegedly caressed both [REDACTED] [REDACTED] openly, each in front of the other. This brazen display of inappropriate physical interaction prompted [REDACTED] whether Respondent's conduct was typical of Indian men. Both complainants report that they directed Respondent to stop touching them, but to no avail.

Also during the first semester of working in Respondent's lab, [REDACTED] assert that they were routinely subjected to Respondent's daily use of profanity and offensive and demeaning remarks about each other and about faculty within the College. In independent statements, [REDACTED] reported that Respondent referred to women colleagues as bitches and male colleagues as bastards. [REDACTED] maintained that Respondent repeatedly commented on female faculty's buttocks, including remarking once about a particular professor in the department that "shaking her ass won't work here". [REDACTED] reported that Respondent randomly and frequently used the word "ass" for no apparent reason other than to say it.

[REDACTED] further maintained that Respondent forced them to accept flowers, chocolates, alcoholic beverages at dinner, and car rides home. [REDACTED] specifically reported that on one occasion, Respondent searched through her bag for her identification when she refused his offer to buy her a drink during a birthday dinner celebration. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] maintained that Respondent also forced them to take photos of the birthday presents that he purchased for them and would require that they continue taking photos if they didn't appear happy in the photos. Respondent allegedly told both [REDACTED] that he looks at [REDACTED] picture every night before going to bed and that she's going to have an [REDACTED] mixed baby". According to [REDACTED] Respondent expressed to her his disdain for [REDACTED] boyfriend, particularly after he learned of her and her boyfriend's decision to move in together, maintaining that he could destroy the relationship if he so chose. Reportedly, when [REDACTED] and Respondent attended a conference, Respondent invited [REDACTED] to share a room with him and during the conference invited her to his room so that they could talk.

Both [REDACTED] reported that Respondent frequently talked about sex in the lab, inquiring about [REDACTED] sex life with her boyfriend and informing [REDACTED] that he is the only man to whom she will always be "married". Both [REDACTED] recounted multiple conversations with Respondent about their menstrual cycles. Both further stated that Respondent randomly sent them photos of ex-girlfriends and women with whom he reportedly had sex. [REDACTED] related that Respondent would frequently call her late at night, even as late as midnight, and on weekends. His calls would last from one to three hours and according to [REDACTED] were never about research. On occasions when she did not answer, Respondent allegedly accused her of disrespecting him as her boss.

[REDACTED] described Respondent as paranoid about others (including them) attempting to sabotage and/or steal his work. This paranoia allegedly manifested in Respondent yelling at them, isolating them from their peers, forbidding them to talk to other faculty, and later, to each other, forbidding them from conducting experiments without him being present, restricting their access to lab equipment, and blaming them for poor experimental outcomes. After less than one year in Respondent's lab, [REDACTED] contacted ODEA on or around

June 4, 2014 to report Respondent's conduct and request that she be moved from his lab. The department successfully facilitated [REDACTED] move to another lab.

Following [REDACTED] departure from the lab, Respondent hired Complainant [REDACTED] who started in September 2014. Within days of her employment in Respondent's lab, [REDACTED] reported experiencing the same type of conduct by Respondent that [REDACTED] had endured over the course of the previous year – inquiries about her husband, her menstrual cycle, references to looking at [REDACTED] photo every night, [REDACTED] having an [REDACTED] baby, regular usage of vulgar and offensive language, referring to colleagues using demeaning terms, and isolation from [REDACTED] and others in the department. [REDACTED] also reported that although she had not met [REDACTED] Respondent regularly referred to his "former student" derogatorily using names such as, "slut", "prostitute", and "blacky", and he maintained that she slept with dogs "because she is a bitch too". Respondent also reportedly informed [REDACTED] that the reason [REDACTED] left his lab was because she was penalized by the department, and now had to pursue her master's.

[REDACTED] reported that due to his very intrusive questions, she shared with Respondent that she had some pregnancy issues and as a result had lingering health issues for which she would need to take periodic, brief leaves for treatment. [REDACTED] reported feeling very uncomfortable with the conversation and the personal and sensitive nature of Respondent's probing questions. [REDACTED] maintained that Respondent continued to ask questions about her health over the course of the semester. [REDACTED] corroborated this asserting that Respondent also asked her whether [REDACTED] was expecting, and he insisted to [REDACTED] that the reason [REDACTED] was unable to have a baby was because she and her husband were unclean.

[REDACTED] also reported that on one occasion Respondent asked her if she could "warm" him up because it was chilly in the lab. On another occasion, Respondent allegedly told [REDACTED] that he intentionally hired a married woman so that he could not be accused of sexual harassment. On yet another occasion while at [REDACTED] birthday dinner, Respondent purportedly warned [REDACTED] that if her husband did not come to pick her up soon, he was going to take her back to the lab and have the kind of party that would cause her husband to be very upset.

Similar to [REDACTED] reported being subjected to Respondent's paranoia, accusations of intentional sabotage of his research, and his volatile temper. After fifteen months and only three months in Respondent's lab, respectively, [REDACTED] both sought assistance from the department to be removed from Respondent's lab. Upon their removal from the lab, Respondent contacted both of them repeatedly, went to their personal residence, and sent [REDACTED] multiple text messages asserting that her abrupt departure from the lab and non-response to his efforts to reach her was destroying him and would ultimately lead to his hospitalization.

#### Analysis of "sufficiently severe or pervasive"

Each of the three persons hired by Respondent reported being subjected to the conduct outlined above multiple times over the course of a few months to over a year. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reported that Respondent's touching, phone calls, inquiries about their sex lives and romantic interests, menstrual cycles, use of vulgar and demeaning language were constant and

ongoing. All three reported near daily comments, questions, and/or Respondent's use of offensive language. Each of them reported objecting to Respondent's actions. Despite such objections, however, Respondent continued to repeatedly engage both students and employee in the same manner. In one instance, Respondent even referenced his intentionality in hiring so as not to be accused of sexual harassment. The frequency and nature of Respondent's conduct and comments are well within the pervasive standard as commonly determined by applicable case law.

Analysis of unreasonably interfering with complainants' work and/or academic performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment

Complainants repeatedly mentioned in their complaints, as well as to Respondent directly, that they were uncomfortable with his profane language, intrusive questions, yelling, and touching. Witnesses interviewed also corroborated overhearing Respondent yelling for extended periods of time. Witnesses also stated hearing what sounded like the Respondent banging his fist or something hard on the desk. Concerned about their personal safety and no longer able to tolerate Respondent's conduct, ultimately each person that Respondent hired left his lab. Despite coming to the U.S. and the University to pursue her PhD, [REDACTED] even elected to resign her PhD program in favor of moving to a different lab. [REDACTED] left Respondent's lab initially with no viable prospects. [REDACTED] after only three months. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Their decision to leave Respondent's lab further illustrates the gravity of their concerns. These decisions individually and collectively clearly demonstrate the impact that Respondent's alleged conduct had on each of the complainants.

Use of "a reasonable person" standard.

The "reasonable person" standard is based on a person of the same general characteristics (gender, age, etc.) of the complainant. In this case, we have a unique situation in that we have three individuals who are all alleging the exact same conduct despite varying periods of employment with the Respondent. Even if there were not essentially three complainants, no reasonable person expects to engage in conversations about her menstrual cycle, romantic interests, sexual activities; have to respond to personal questions about her health; nor be subjected to multiple inquiries about her pregnancy status within her place of employment and particularly by her supervisor. These topics and conversations are not appropriate in the workplace and have no relevance to the work that complainants have been hired to perform.

Respondent denied many of the allegations and proffered alternative reasons for engaging in the conduct that he acknowledges as being true. Respondent maintained that his position as a physician gave him the authority to inquire about Complainants' menstrual cycles, and his inquiries about [REDACTED] potential pregnancy were to ensure her health and safety in the lab. Respondent argued that Complainants are like daughters to him and his use of "sweetie" and "sweetheart" were merely terms of endearment. Similarly, his visits to Complainants' home were again to make sure that they were safe after they did not show up to the lab and since he had received no response to calls and text messages.

Respondent is not new to the workplace. If, in fact, Respondent was concerned about Complainant [REDACTED] health and lifting restrictions, he should have sought guidance from the College's HR department or other appropriate campus resources as to his and/or the College's options. Questions, particularly continual questions about an employee's pregnancy status, cross the lines of appropriate and acceptable professional conversation between a supervisor and employee. Similarly, despite Respondent's perceived relationship with Complainants, use of pet names, terms of endearment or names other than the person's given name (unless otherwise allowed or requested by the employee/student) are not appropriate within the workplace. Further, despite Respondent's medical credentials, Respondent is not serving in a physician capacity. Thus, his argument that his interest in these topics was the impetus for the related conversations goes beyond the reach of his capacity as an assistant professor of comparative biosciences.

When three different complainants, who have no prior relationship and no significant commonalities other than the lab in which they work, all assert the same type of interaction, one must question Respondent's credibility and honesty in responding to the allegations. This coupled with having multiple complainants and Respondent's colleagues also corroborate the yelling that the Complainants allege diminishes Respondent's credibility. Additionally, in his annual review letter, Respondent was specifically requested to have his students actively participate in departmental seminars and activities, as it had been noticed by other faculty that Respondent's students were not attending the activities. This factor supports Complainant's allegations that Respondent tried to isolate them from other faculty and staff in the department.

Based on the foregoing, it is determined that Respondent violated the University's sexual harassment policy by engaging in conduct that is sufficiently pervasive as to have created a hostile environment. Specifically, I find that Complainants' workplace was pervaded with sexual slurs, insults, and innuendos and that they were subjected to physical and verbal sexual harassment consisting of extremely vulgar and offensive sexually related epithets.

#### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

Based upon the evidence obtained during the investigation, which included statements from three females assigned to Respondent's lab that Respondent regularly subjected them to unwelcomed comments that were offensive, demeaning and sexually related, I find that Respondent engaged in sexual harassment in violation of University policy. Given the seriousness and pervasiveness of the conduct, and Respondent's continuation of that conduct despite prior counseling, Respondent's conduct warrants discipline, up to and including the cessation of his employment. The department, in consultation with the Office of the Provost and Academic Human Resources, should determine what discipline is appropriate under the applicable University policies. If Respondent's employment is continued, the department should require Respondent to undergo and successfully complete sexual harassment training. This Office can assist the department in providing that training to Respondent. Furthermore, if Respondent's employment is continued, the department should impose measures to carefully monitor Respondent's interactions with female personnel and students, and must take prompt, remedial action if Respondent engages in any further conduct that violates the University's sexual harassment policy.

**This report is private and confidential. It should not be shared or circulated to others except as necessary for implementing these recommendations.**

Most Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Michal T. Hudson  
Senior Title IX-ADA Specialist

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

College of Veterinary Medicine  
2001 S. Lincoln Avenue  
M/C 002  
Urbana, Illinois 61802



March 3, 2015

HAND DELIVERED

Dr. Valarmathi Thiruvanamalai

[REDACTED]

Re: Determination

Dear Professor Thiruvanamalai:

As you are aware, the University's Office of Diversity, Equity and Access (ODEA) conducted an investigation into sexual harassment allegations brought against you by three females who were assigned to your lab. That investigation was conducted in accordance with the *Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination and Harassment at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign* ("Policy") that were in place at the time that the allegations were raised and culminated in a report, a copy of which was provided to you, that concluded that you in fact had engaged in sexual harassment that was so pervasive as to create a hostile work environment in violation of University policy. Specifically, the investigator's report found that you permeated the workplace with "sexual slurs, insults and innuendos" and subjected female colleagues to "physical and sexual harassment consisting of extremely vulgar and offensive sexually related epithets."

It is now my duty under the Policy as the executive officer for the unit to which you are assigned to render a final disposition. Based upon the conduct referenced within the investigator's report and after conferring with representatives of ODEA, the Office of the Provost, the Office of University Counsel, and Academic Human Resources, I conclude that you no longer are fit to continue the duties expected of you in your position as an assistant professor and that you breached the terms of your appointment. Accordingly, you shall remain on paid administrative leave through the remainder of your current service contract, at which time your employment with the University will end on August 15, 2015 without an offer of a terminal contract. Because of your inability to provide services throughout your administrative leave period, you will not be paid the summer salary referenced in your 2012 offer letter, nor will you be granted any start-up funds.

This period of administrative leave will allow you an opportunity, should you choose to take it, to exercise the appeal rights afforded to you under the Policy. If you wish to exercise these rights, you may do so by submitting a written appeal to the Dean for the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Peter

Dr. Valarmathi Thiruvanamalai

March 3, 2015

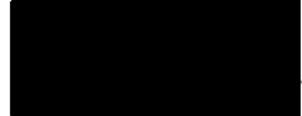
Page | 2

Constable, within fourteen (14) calendar days following your receipt of this determination. The address for Dr. Constable is College of Veterinary Medicine, 2001 S. Lincoln Avenue, Urbana, Illinois 61802. I have attached for your convenience a copy of the applicable Policy that describes your appeal rights.

While on administrative leave, you are not to perform any work on behalf of the University, nor are you to enter any buildings or surrounding grounds associated with the University's College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Medicine, or the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, or contact or communicate with any University employees, students or other stakeholders regarding this or any other matters relating to your employment or to the entities referenced above, without my prior, express written permission. I will arrange a time with you to return to collect any personal belongings that you may have left at the University and to allow you time to close out your lab.

If you should have any questions relating to the termination of your appointment, you may contact Sharon Reynolds, the Associate Director for Labor and Employee Relations within Academic Human Resources, by telephone at (217) 333-6747 or by e-mail at [sreynolds@illinois.edu](mailto:sreynolds@illinois.edu).

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular box redacting a signature.

Duncan C. Ferguson  
Department Head, Comparative Sciences

Enclosure

cc: Peter D. Constable, College of Veterinary Medicine  
Elyne Cole, Office of the Provost  
Craig Hoefer, Office of University Counsel  
Sharon Reynolds, Academic Human Resources